In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 24 and 25 without prejudice, amend claims 1, 18, 21, 26, and 27, and add new dependent claim 28 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A communication system for communicating with multiple participating devices, said communication system comprising

a plurality of the participating devices,

a communication line connecting the participating devices with each other, and

one or more respective connection devices for connecting an interface device for communication with a corresponding one of the participating devices indirectly via said communication line, said corresponding participating device being defined as associated with said one or more respective connection devices, said one or more respective connection devices being connected with the communication line;

wherein said one or more respective connection devices are not included in said participating devices and are also not included in said interface device; and

wherein said one or more respective connection devices comprise readable means for identification of said corresponding participating device defined as associated with said one or more respective connection devices, wherein said readable means is readable by said interface device connectable to the one or more connection devices.

2. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, comprising a local network including said participating devices.

3. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 2, wherein said local network is an Ethernet network.

4. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 2, wherein said local network is an IP network.

5. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said communication line is a data line.

6. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein the interface device is an operating and display unit.

7. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 6, wherein said operating and display unit is a portable terminal.

8. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said participating devices each comprise control means for controlling at least one machine and/or robot unit.

9. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said one or more respective connection devices are connected to said corresponding participating device, which is defined as associated with said one or more respective connection devices, with the communication line for communication with one or more terminals.

10. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said readable means for identification of said corresponding participating device defined as associated with said one or more respective connection device is a programmable controller.

11. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 10, wherein said programmable controller is a microcontroller.

12. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 10, wherein said programmable controller is connectable and readable by means of a separate connecting line provided in said one or more respective connection device.

13. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 12, wherein said separate connecting line is a separate serial connecting wire.

14. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 10, wherein said programmable controller comprises a memory element for storage of

identification information, and said programmable controller is programmable during a configuration stage by the interface device.

15. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said one or more respective connection devices comprises a safety line, and said safety line connects said corresponding participating device directly with said interface device connected to said one or more respective connection devices.

16. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein said one or more respective connection devices comprise a voltage supply line for supplying voltage to said interface device.

17. (original) The communication system as defined in claim 1, comprising an IP network and wherein said readable means stores a readable IP address of said corresponding participating device defined as associated with said one or more respective connection devices.

18. (currently amended) A connection device for connecting an interface device to an associated participating device of a communication system indirectly via a connection line, said communication system comprising multiple participating devices connected by [[a]] said communication line, wherein said connection device is not part of said participating device and is also not part of said interface device; and

wherein said connection device comprises ~~comprising~~ readable means for identification of a corresponding participating device defined as associated with said connection device, ~~wherein~~ said readable means is readable by said interface device connectable to the connection device, and said connection device is connected to said communication line for communication with said corresponding participating device.

19. (original) The connection device as defined in claim 18, wherein said readable means is a programmable controller.

20. (original) The connection device as defined in claim 19, wherein said programmable controller comprises a memory element for storage of identification information, and said programmable controller is programmable during a configuration stage by the interface device.

21. (currently amended) The connection device ~~communication system~~ as defined in claim 18, further comprising a separate connecting line ~~provided in said one or more respective connection device, said connecting line being arranged~~ for connection with the interface device.

22. (original) The connection device as defined in claim 18, further comprising a safety line, and wherein said safety line connects said corresponding

participating device directly with said interface device when said interface device is connected.

23. (original) The connection device as defined in claim 18, further comprising a voltage supply line for supplying voltage to said interface device when said interface device is connected.

Claims 24 to 25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A method of identifying a participating device of a communication system, wherein said communication system comprises multiple participating devices, a communication line connecting said participating devices with each other and at least one connection device for connecting an interface device for communication with a corresponding one of the participating devices indirectly via the communication line, said corresponding participating device being ~~which is~~ defined as associated with the at least one connection device and not including said at least one connection device, said at least one connection device being connected with the communication line;

wherein the at least one connection device comprises readable means for identification of the corresponding participating device defined as associated with said at least one connection devices, wherein said readable means is readable by said interface device connectable to the at least one connection device, wherein said method comprises the steps of:

a) connecting said interface device to said at least one connection device;

b) reading said readable means for identification of the corresponding participating device defined as associated with said at least one connection device; and

c) making a communication connection between the interface device and the corresponding participating device defined as associated with said at least one connection device, said communication connection connecting the interface device with the corresponding participating device indirectly by means of said at least one connection device via the communication line.

27. (currently amended) The method as defined in claim 26, wherein said reading said readable means for identification of the corresponding participating device comprises reading an IP address stored in the readable means.

28. (new) The communication system as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said one or more connection devices is a programmable controller, which is connected to said interface device via a separate connecting line;

wherein said programmable controller comprises a readable means for identification of said corresponding participating device and wherein said readable means for identification comprises a memory device for storage of identification information for identifying said corresponding participating device, said readable memory device being readable by said interface device connectable therewith; and

wherein said programmable controller is programmable during a configuration stage by the interface device.